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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [KV](#) [UNMIK](#)
SUBJECT: KOSOVO: SOUTHERN MODERATES FIND VOICE AS BELGRADE
POLITICAL DIVISIONS SHARPEN

Classified By: Chief of Mission Tina S. Kaidanow for Reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

11. (C) Summary. Political differences in Belgrade between Serbian President Boris Tadic's Democratic Serbia (DS) and Prime Minister Kostunica's Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) are beginning to have an effect upon Kosovo Serbs in the enclaves south of the Ibar River. Many are beginning to voice discontent with the Serbian government's conduct of its policy towards Kosovo. Increasingly, their complaints are coalescing around Serbian Minister for Kosovo Slobodan Samardzic, who got a rough reception in the south during his March 30-31 visit to Kosovo. Moderate Kosovo Serb leaders have expressed some unhappiness with plans for local elections and their probable manipulation by the DSS, although they acknowledge them as an inevitability. Serbian Economy Minister and G17 party leader Mladjan Dinkic visited Kosovo April 16, in an effort to convince local Serbs that there was little alternative to cooperation with the international community (and that those in Belgrade promising them aid may not be telling the truth). In the final analysis, both we and our moderate Serb contacts consider the results of the Serbian parliamentary elections as the decisive factor in determining the future course of the Kosovo Serb community in the south. End Summary.

A Bit of Space

12. (C) A wide range of moderate Kosovo Serb contacts with whom we have spoken in recent weeks have pointed to publicly-aired differences between the DS and DSS over Kosovo policy. Since it is clear to them that the Serbian government's "action plan" for Kosovo was not endorsed by the DS party or the entire government, Serbs in the south of Kosovo have become more open with their discontent, with some who were instructed by Belgrade to leave their jobs in Kosovo institutions protesting over the lack of corresponding help from the Serbian government. The focal point for their complaints is Serbian Minister for Kosovo Slobodan Samardzic, whose recently-announced plan calling for "functional separation" of Kosovo's Serb- and Albanian-majority areas has come under heavy fire from the southern Serbs. Expressing a view held by all moderates we speak with, on March 28, Bogoljub Milosevic, a former Kosovo MP from Kamenica, called the plan an "apartheid system."

No Help from Belgrade

13. (C) Another common complaint has been lack of financial support from Serbia. Samardzic's most recent visit to Kosovo (March 30-31) became rocky when he traveled in the south. Zoran Krcmarevic, a member of the DS party who serves in the Serbian Ministry for Kosovo's Coordination Center for Kosovo (CCK) in Viti/Vitina municipality, gave us a readout of Samardzic's meeting in Laplje Selo March 31, at which former Kosovo MP Randjel Nojkic, a member of the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) party, and Dragan Velic, a senior board member of the Serb National Council (SNC) Gracanica, both accused Samardzic of "deceiving people with false promises."

14. (C) A group of Serb KPS officers, suspended from their jobs since February 29, told us April 3 that they had no faith in the still-unkept promises of Slobodan Samardzic to provide them with salaries from Serbia. They claim that suspended Serb KPS officers are continuing to maintain order in their communities. In spite of this, security conditions in Gracanica and other enclaves were "getting worse," due in part to discontent among local Serbs with the Serbian government and in part to a shortage of KPS officers.

15. (C) In a separate development, 87 Serb guards from the Dubrava prison (Lipljan), who heeded Samardzic's call to leave their jobs on February 17, began a "blockade" protest of the Gracanica CCK office on April 1, demanding salaries and/or compensation from Serbia to replace the income lost when they left Kosovo institutions (see Pristina Bullets from April 2). The protesters have been joined by other Serbs who

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also quit Kosovo government jobs. According to Boban Petrovic, who is leading this protest, CCK Regional Coordinator for Pristina (and DS member) Goran Arsic met with the group and told them that Samardzic is indeed to blame for their predicament, despite the fact that Arsic himself is employed by the very ministry Samardzic heads. On April 5, Petrovic said that the protesters would soon bring their families to join them in protest and might organize transport for the entire group to go to Belgrade and block government offices there.

16. (C) Also on April 1, a group of youths in the Serb enclave of Gorazdevac (Peja/Pec municipality) protested in front of the CCK office there, demanding both employment opportunities from the Serbian government and to see the list of Serbs in the Pec region receiving the "Kosovo addition" to their salaries. Radio KiM, a local Serb outlet, reported that the group demanded the list because of their suspicion that many on it do not actually live in Kosovo but receive the money anyway because of political connections with the DSS party. Pec regional CCK coordinator Radojko Dunic (DSS) reportedly told the group that the list was in Belgrade and could not be publicly revealed. (Note: Dunic was the author of the "blacklist" of the 17 Serbs who voted in the November 2007 Kosovo elections, and the alleged organizer of the December 8 protest/scuffle in Gorazdevac when SRSG Ruecker and COMKFOR visited the enclave. End Note.)

CCK Moderates Also Unhappy with Samardzic

17. (C) CCK officials from the DS and its ally, Serbian Economy Minister Mladjan Dinkic's G17 party, have their own complaints about Samardzic's management of the CCK itself. On March 31, Belgrade radio station B92 reported that Goran Bogdanovic, a member of the Serbian Parliament and senior DS figure in Kosovo, accused Samardzic of leading a "one party policy" within the CCK which only favors his fellow DSS party members and bypasses CCK officials from other parties. This is a very common complaint from non-DSS CCK coordinators from the DS and G17, who have been complaining to us privately about this for months. In opening a conversation on April 7, Srbojub Djokic, CCK coordinator for Kamenica (G17) joked that "you (poloff) obviously already know how bad our

relations are with our own ministry."

Moderates Unhappy with Local Elections

18. (C) Although acknowledging that they will occur, many officials within the CCK are generally unhappy with the prospect of local elections in Kosovo. Goran Arsic, Predrag Stojkovic (CCK Municipal Coordinator for Gnjilane/Gjilan/DS), Srboljub Djokic (CCK Municipal Coordinator for Kamenica/G17), and others all said on April 7 that they have heard little-to-nothing from the Ministry for Kosovo or the Serbian elections commission (RIK) about the details of organizing local elections, which leaves them worried that the DSS will manipulate the voting to its own ends. Goran Bogdanovic, a Kosovo Serb who is a DS member of the Serbian Parliament and a senior party figure in Kosovo, said April 9 that the combination of outdated voter lists and IDP voting would allow the DSS to mobilize support among displaced Kosovo Serbs living in Serbia to vote in "municipal" elections in municipalities where a) they do not live, and/or b) to which they will not return. This would only "worsen" the plight of Serbs in enclaves by leading to more confusion.

19. (C) Outside the CCK, other Kosovo Serb moderates are in general agreement on the need for alternative political options for Kosovo Serbs. However, they also think that such options will not be found through the May 11 local elections.

Dragomir Mikic, a member of former Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Draskovic's Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) party and the appointed Serb Deputy Mayor of Kamenica municipality, told us March 28 that while the DS/G17/SPO coalition might do well in the May 11 Serbian parliamentary elections, the corresponding local elections were a concern for moderates, as the DSS has a better infrastructure in Kosovo (his opinion is widely

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